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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2505

April 26, 1991

MADIGAN'S PLAN FOR USDA -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** recently told members of the National Association of Agricultural Journalists meeting in Washington, D.C., that in the months to come, he will have USDA focusing on these three broad points:

-- Protecting the environment, while protecting the rights of U.S. farmers to use the land and the rights of U.S. citizens to a safe and abundant food supply;

-- Simplifying the way in which farmers are forced to do business by reducing their paperwork burden, which will in turn increase their ability to make their own choices; and

-- Helping to raise the level of the public's nutritional awareness through USDA nutrition programs, such as food stamps & WIC. Contact: **Kelly Shipp** (202) 447-4623.

LEAN MEAT EDUCATION MATERIALS -- USDA's Extension Service has developed a new program to help consumers choose & prepare lean meats. "The program incorporates the most current research available on lean meats," says **Myron Johnsrud**, administrator of USDA's Extension Service. The materials were written for various age & economic groups, with varying levels of knowledge about meats. "**The Consumer's Choice -- Lean Meat**" features info on producing lean, safe meat, nutrition & health; buying lean meats; safe preparation; & wise selection of "convenience" meat products. Abridged copies are available to media from: **Pam Kinney** (202) 447-8344. Contact: **Cathy Bridwell** (202) 447-6084.

BEE CONTACTS -- As bee swarming season continues, swarms of Africanized honey bees have been found & destroyed in Texas, just north of the U.S.-Mexican border. "Since this is the swarming season," says **James W. Glosser**, administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service, "as long as the weather and food supply remain favorable, south Texans can continue to see honey bee swarms." Africanized honey bee contacts include:

Doug Hendrix, APHIS, Hyattsville, Md. (301) 436-7255; and

Walter Sheppard, USDA's Agricultural Research Center Bee Research Lab, Beltsville, Md. (301) 344-2205.

BEE GENES -- According to USDA research recently published in *Nature* magazine, the genes of Africanized honey bees are mixing with those of European-descended honeybees in North & South America. "This research holds out hope that interbreeding will mitigate the undesirable traits of the Africanized bee as it spreads into the U.S., says **Steve Sheppard**, a USDA entomologist. Contact: **Steve Sheppard** (301) 344-3970.

SOYBEAN QUALITY STUDY -- USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service & the Japan Oilseed Processors Association have launched the first phase of a cooperative study of soybean quality between origin & destination ports. The study involves inspecting soybean cargo both at its origin, New Orleans, La., & at destination ports near Tokyo. Data from this study will provide valuable info about the effects of handling on soybean quality. **Contact:** Dana Stewart (202) 382-0378.

WHAT IS A SMALL FARM? A profitable small farm is not a big farm system with half the acres. Remember, a big elephant chopped in half is not two small elephants. For other thoughts & tips on small-scale ag, get the spring 1991 copy of "Small-Scale Agriculture Today" **Contact:** Bud Kerr (202) 401-4640.

HUSBANDS & WIVES SEPARATE -- Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan has announced that husbands & wives may qualify as separate people under the Commodity Credit Corporation's payment-limitation rules if they do not receive payment from more than one source. He also said an interest in an estate will not be considered another source. Madigan said the new payment-limitation & payment-eligibility rules modify existing rules and affect other programs. **Contact:** John C. Ryan (202) 447-8207.

FOREIGN-OWNED LAND -- Foreign interests owned 14.45 million acres, or slightly more than 1 percent, of privately owned U.S. ag land as of Dec. 31. "Foreign ownership climbed 13 percent from a year earlier," says John Lee, administrator of USDA's Economic Research Service. From 1981 through 1990, holdings have remained relatively steady at about 1 percent. **Contact:** J. Peter DeBraal (202) 219-0425.

FARMLAND VALUE UP 2 PERCENT -- U.S. farm real estate values rose 2 percent during 1990, marking the fourth straight increase since their slide in the mid-1980's, USDA economists say. On Jan. 1, farmland & buildings averaged \$684 per acre, 14 percent above the 1987 low, but still 17 percent below the record \$823 in 1982. However, because inflation rates of 3 to 4 percent in recent years have partially offset gains in nominal farmland values, the U.S. has not yet had a sustained recovery of real farmland values. **Contact:** Roger Hexem or Fred Kuchler (202) 219-0423.

FARMERS' INVESTMENTS -- In 1991, unit sales of tractors & farm machinery are expected to rise an average of 4 percent from a year earlier, USDA economists say. Several factors point toward a sustained increase in investment in equipment -- including the strengthening of farmers' financial positions, lower cost & expanding availability of credit, an aging stock of capital equipment & higher real rates of return on farm assets. **Contact:** Nathan Childs (202) 219-0313.

LAS VEGAS EXPO OPENS APRIL 30 -- Full-service media facilities will be available at the Food & Agriculture Exposition in Las Vegas, Nev., April 30 through May 2. The media center will include two media rooms, featuring computers, printers, FAX machines, a copier, modem & typewriters, plus an adjacent on-site radio studio. The media center can be reached at (702) 791-8580.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1768 -- The secretary of agriculture can have tremendous impact not only on farm policy, but also on policies affecting the environment & consumers. Brenda Curtis examines the views of our new secretary of agriculture, Ed Madigan. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1250 -- The "bees" are here; the shifting sweetener scene; smoke gets in our bones; toxins vs. pesticides in foods; rice bran. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1758 -- USDA News Highlights; changing times in the USSR; tracking integrated pest management trends; arguing for "fast track;" changes in the acreage conservation reserve program. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE # 1417 -- Trace elements & osteoporosis; health club fat meters; more accurate body composition; herbicides & ozone; herbicidal cancer treatment. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tues., April 30, crop/weather update, world tobacco situation, ag prices, catfish production; Wed., May 1, horticultural exports; no scheduled reports until May 7, but our newsline will cover daily events & will continue to offer new items daily; Tues., May 7, crop/weather update; Thurs., May 9, U.S. crop production, world ag supply & demand; Fri., May 10, world ag/grain situation, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation. (These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling!)

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(Week of April 25, 27 & 29, 1991)

ACTUALITIES -- Highlights from hearings before the House Agriculture Committee on fast track authority & the U.S.-Mexico free trade agreement with Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan & U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills; USDA Meteorologist Norton Strommen on planting progress in the Great Plains & the Corn Belt & on the fruit crop; USDA Economist Jim Miller on dairy; USDA Economist Nathan Childs on California's sugar beet industry & farmland values; & USDA Economist Ron Gustafson on cattle on feed.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on new chart for healthy weights for Americans; Lynn Wyvill reports on safe food handling practices at home & Pat O'Leary reports on pesticide applicator training program.

Available on Satellite Westar IV, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT
SATURDAY 10 - 10:45 a.m., EDT
MONDAY 8 - 8:45 a.m., EDT

OFFMIKE

EVERYBODY IS TREADING WATER...but we're going to make it, says **Ray Forcier** (KWKH, Shreveport, La.). In one day 22.2 inches of rain fell. Normal amount for the year is 48 inches. Some cotton will be replanted because producers can wait until late May, but the main problem could be getting into the field. Ray says the outlook for May is above normal rainfall.

WE'RE UNDER WATER...but not to the level in Louisiana, says **Gordon Barnes** (KSSN, Little Rock, Ark.). Producers will be on the lookout for disease & will not plant early varieties of soybeans.

CORN PLANTING...is underway, says **Donald Baker** (KFRM, Great Bend, Kan.). Moisture is adequate, which helps wheat develop. Soybeans will go in the ground about May 1. Don says producers are very interested in outcome of credit sales to the Soviets. Don and crew are covering live the 3-I (Implements, Irrigation & Industry) show in Garden City, April 25-27.

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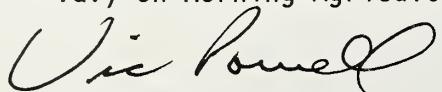
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DAIRY PRODUCERS...attending the recent Ohio Spring Dairy Spectacular believe hard times facing the industry will be met with a supply management program, says **Christi Bentley-Bachman** (WRFD, Columbus, Ohio). This spring marks the third consecutive year of soggy fields. Christi says wetness & cold temperatures will delay planting.

LOW PRICES...for wheat has prompted one producer to graze out the field & plow it under, says **Jim Yeary** (KGNC, Amarillo, Texas). The farmer told Jim the action was more cost efficient than bringing the combine out of storage.

WEEKLY COMMENTARY...is now being broadcast by former Secretary of Agriculture **John Block** (National American Wholesale Grocers Association, Falls Church, Va.) on Morning Agriculture Report, Indianapolis, Ind.



VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division